

## Kendra Caskey is Now a Full-Fledged Librarian

Just in time to ring in the new year, Ogallala has it's own librarian, officially.

Through Library Director, Kendra Caskey has worked for the Goodall City Library since October, 2007 she was not technically considered a librarian because she didn't have her masters in library science. The definition of librarian comes with a MLS," Kendra said. As of December 16, 2011, Kendra graduated with honors, from the Texas Woman's University at Denton, TX, with an MLS and the distinction of a "true" librarian. Along with bragging rights, Kendra said the degree brings with it the benefit of increased federal and state funding for Goodall City Library. Kendra said the library board of directors wanted to hire a library director with an MLS. It's hard to find that in this location, Kendra said. As part of her hiring agreement, not long after she began as library director, Kendra started taking classes at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. However, that program required monthly face-to-face visits, which for a working mother of three, was not always possible.

"That didn't work out for me," she said. "I needed to find a program that fit my life." Not only was she looking for a program she could do online, she needed a program accredited by the American Library Association.

After finding Texas Women's University, she sign up.

"I started when my fourth child was 7 weeks old. That was really stupid.," she said with a wry smile.

The program requires 36 credit hours, a practicum with 150 hours and a dissertation approved by three deans of the college in order to graduate.

Kendra said since she was in the unique position of already being a library director, the practicum was waived.



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“That was very unusual , that opportunity does not arise most places,” she said. “I’m really thankful I was in this position while I took my classes.”

After writing 120 pages on intellectual freedom for her dissertation, which was approved October 15, Kendra breathed a sigh of relief.

“If you don’t pass that, you’re out of the program,” she said. “There are people who don’t make it.” But Kendra did make it, with honors and credits time management to her success.

“Kendra said you have this window from 1am to 3pm to turn your paper in, and that’s it.” “After that, it’s time to go and be a mom,” she said.

Through working full time made classes tough to fit in at times, Kendra said she was able to bring real-world experience to her classes that few other MLS students could.

“Every single one of these classes, I could relate to something I do for my job,” she said. “It related to every day life here at the library. I think I brought a little more to my classes that way.”

Another asset to Kendra’s work and classes, she said, is her business background. “Business has always been my thing, but when I moved to Ogallala, I didn’t really have to plan,” Kendra said.

Now, as libraries fight for funding like so many other entities, Kendra said her business mindset and newly minted MLS degree are the perfect marriage of know how. “You’re going to see a huge pendulum swing in library directors moving to have business backgrounds,” Kendra said. “Libraries need to have a voice.” From marketing to budgeting to basic economics, Kendra said her bachelor’s degree in business and experience as a business owner have helped “immensely.” “Some people don’t like to hear a library is a business, but it is,” Kendra said.

“You have to prove your worth, especially when you’re dealing with tax dollars.”

So, now that Kendra has completed her program, will she take some time to relax? She shakes her head with a smile.

“That’s not my personality,” she said. “I do kind of want to just be a mom for a while.”

Now, Kendra said she hopes to focus on a strategic, long term plan for the library. “Where do we want to be 10, 20 years from now? Let’s think long term,” she said.

In 2012, Kendra said she hopes to nail down whether or not the community will build a new library facility.

“I want us to have a new facility. Just for accessibility, we really need a new one,” she said. Part of that decision will include whether or not to use the United States Department of Agriculture loan option Ogallala received earlier this year, which Kendra said was a “huge win” for the community, if a new facility is built.

“We want to look into that, to see if we want to use it or not”, she said. And, now that Kendra has completed her program, she said she plans to focus on the library itself, possibly revamping its organizational format. “My aspiration is to make this library more than what it is. Not necessarily better, just more,” she said.

Article and picture provided by the Keith County News. Permission given by Candy DenOuden, Keith County News .

## Lied Scottsbluff Public Library Named One of Top 10 Children's Libraries by Livability.com

Livability.com, a national website that highlights more than 500 of America's best places to live. Livability.com editors looked at 500 communities across the country to find the best libraries for kids. The children's libraries selected not only look amazing, they also offer great programs and get kids excited about reading and exploring. Editors consulted several nationally recognized authorities on the subject of libraries and children's literature, including the American Library Association, to determine

criteria for the ranking. Among them: the library's responsiveness to community's needs.

"[A Library] should be responsive to its community rather than beholden to some kind of national standard," said Roger Sutton, editor in chief of The Horn Book, which reviews and tracks children's and young adult literature. "The best libraries pay attention to their communities and the best librarians are those who really pay attention to the child in front of them, as well as the child who is not there but should be."

The Lied Scottsbluff Public Library was chosen for its visually appealing spaces for children, full range of programs, large collection of books, integration of new technologies and proven success in getting kids engaged. Congratulations Deb Carlson and staff at the Children's Library at The Lied Scottsbluff Public Library.



The Panhandle Library System is currently advertising for a new Coordinator. Advertising will continue through March 25 or until filled. In the mean time Christa J. Burns, Special Projects Librarian from the Nebraska Library Commission will be available as the Panhandle's first point of contact with the commission. Christa will be familiarizing herself with PLS by reading back issues of the System's newsletter and by reading minutes of past PLS System Board meetings. She will also be reading and posting items to the PLS blog.



***Blog***

**Panhandle Library System Board Meeting  
November 8, 2011  
Railway Plaza**

**I. President Floyd Smith III** called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. Board members present were Floyd Smith III, Beth Trupp, Terry Christensen, Dixie Riley, Rick Caudillo, Roberta Boyd, Sara Brennemann, and Sue Shaver. Merrillene Wood and Kendra Caskey were absent. Debbie McCall was also present.

The agenda was set by the board.

**II. Review and approve Minutes from July 29, 2011, Board Meeting.**

Motion to approve the minutes from July 29, 2011, board meeting were made by Rick Caudillo and seconded by Sue Shaver. The motion carried.

**III. Review and approve Minutes from September 13, 2011, Board Meeting.**

The September 13, 2011, board minutes were approved. Sara Brennemann made the motion for approval of the minutes. Dixie Riley seconded the motion.

**IV. Reports**

**a. District reports. District D (Sara).** Sara called Goodall City Library in Ogallala. Their stats were up 15 percent. They had a Halloween party. Grant County Public Library is working on the BTOP Grant and is very excited. It will be receiving new furniture and lighting. Grant County Library held a fundraiser in which 24 dozen cookies were made along with soups and cinnamon rolls. Grant County Public Library will be switching over to Alexandria. Sara talked to Liz at Arthur County Library. They will also receive computers from the BTOP grant. Paxton Public Library recently held a tech night and will also receive equipment from the BTOP grant. Paxton Public Library also has story time and at Halloween handed out bookmarks.

**At Large (Beth):** Gering Public Library will start barcoding in January.

**Academic/Special (Merrillene):** Merrillene was not in attendance but sent an email to Floyd Smith III. Floyd reported WNCC Scottsbluff has a new director. His name is Curtis Brundy. He has expressed an interest in Alexandria. Curtis Brundy has redone the WNCC webpage, is starting a DVD collection and making other changes.

**b. Committee reports**

**i. Annual Meeting (Terry & Roberta):** Terry said the next PLS annual meeting will be at the Mari Sandoz Heritage Center at Chadron State College on July 20, 2012. Sarah Polak will speak about Mari Sandoz and teaching in a one room school. CSC will cater the morning coffee and lunch. The Reta King Library is going through major changes. The main floor is becoming an information center with a relaxed atmosphere.

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**II. Nominating (Dixie & Sue):** According to the PLS Policies and Procedures, in March the committee begins the nominating process for board members.

**III. Public Relations (Beth & Rick):** Beth presented a budget from the author tour and a brief report. Diane deGroat talked to 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders throughout the Panhandle and gave 2 public performances. This year Copperfield Books sold 191 books by Diane. PLS purchased deGroat prints and raffled them off and made \$110.00 from the raffle. PLS received donations from various public libraries, friends groups, foundations and Wal-Mart. All enjoyed Diane. Bookmarks were printed and given to all the children. Beth thanked Floyd for driving Diane deGroat around the panhandle. Floyd and Beth took Diane deGroat to Chimney Rock and the Scottsbluff Nation Monument. Diane deGroat enjoyed both sites and took many pictures, especially of cows!

**iv. Scholarship (Merrillene & Kendra):** Per email from Merrillene, two Scholarships were given to Tammy Covalt and Martin McAndrew of \$100.00 each. There is \$200.00 available in the scholarship account for remaining year of 2011.

**v. Technology (Sara & Floyd):** Floyd Smith III went to NLA/NEMA Conference and heard a person talking about a consortium in Colorado through Adobe. The software by Adobe is similar to overdrive. PLS can add it to our consortium. Floyd Smith III said we will need more details before PLS can purchase it.

**c. Shared Automation Project Report: Floyd Smith III.** There will be a Shared automation meeting for the PLS core group and they will decide on a name. Floyd Smith III said he already has 6 or 7 suggestions for consortium names. Floyd Smith III said the consortium already has policies. Bridgeport and Hemingford are also interested in joining Alexandria.

**d. PLS Coordinator Report** Floyd Smith III has a meeting scheduled for tomorrow to go through the PLS Coordinator job description. There will not be any decisions before January 5, 2012. Debbie McCall attended E-rate training in Sidney. She found out there is a timeline to start e-rate which is July 1. Debbie McCall said e-rate is a little easier and more streamlined. Everything is done online and e-rate tells you when to file your next form. Debbie McCall showed the PLS board the flow chart. To determine the amount you may receive back from e-rate, you'll need to go online to the school lunch program for your district. You can file for long distance phone calls, internet, one time wiring, etc. You can do an online comparison to see if e-rate will pay for all the work. Enrollment can be done on July 1.

**e. Nebraska Library Commission Report: Rod Wagner:** Rod was absent.

**Debbie McCall's vacation and sick leave:** Debbie receives 7 hours per month of vacation and sick leave. Debbie's total vacation is 22 hours earned and sick leave is 17 hours earned. According to the PLS policies and procedures, permanent part-time employees earn prorated vacation and sick leave. Vacation must be used up by December 31. Unused sick leave may accumulate to 60 days. Special cases may be extended.

## **V. Old Business**

**a. Budget: Floyd Smith III:** There is no budget at this time. The accountant has gone through all the items at the PLS office. Gary Riggs has talked to PLS accountant for more information. PLS received a check for \$18992.00 from the Nebraska Library Commission for a federal grant. The September/October financial reports indicate a balance of \$40337.00. Floyd Smith III did get a PLS Visa card for the author tour to purchase fuel, meals and pay for other expenses.

## **VI. New Business:**

**a. Committees: Something to consider.** PLS committee chairs may choose their committee members and also have a code of conduct for all committee members. Rick Caudillo suggested names from the PLS members be compiled to assist in helping choose committee members. Rick Caudillo will prepare a rough draft code of conduct for committees.

**b. Jeri Clapper:** Jeri will work at PLS on Fridays and help with special projects only until a coordinator is hired. Jeri will work under Debbie's direction. Roberta Boyd made a motion that Jeri will be a temporary office assistant and seconded by Beth Trupp. The motion carried.

**c. Dixie Riley:** Dixie will be retiring from Chappell Memorial Library but she will remain on the PLS board. Dixie will also train the new director at Chappell Memorial Library.

**VII. Upcoming Events / Announcements:** The Kapco workshop evaluation was shared with the PLS board. Everyone enjoyed this workshop and thought it was too short. PLS will have another day-long Kapco workshop in the coming year 2012.. PLS received a thank you from Jan Varn, Gordon-Rushville Schools elementary librarian, about the PLS Author Tour. Debbie read the thank you during the PLS Board meeting. Beth Trupp stated she will no longer be chair for the next author tour and will bring her author tour notebook to the PLS office. Roberta Boyd said the Lied Scottsbluff Public Library is now open 7 days a week. Prime time family reading is held at the Dakota Lutheran Center.

## **VIII Executive Session**

**ix. Adjournment** at 11.35 am

The next PLS Board meeting is January 10, 2012, at 10:00 am at Railway Plaza, 115 Railway Street, Scottsbluff.

Secretary,

Terry Christensen

## Upcoming Events

**March 13, 2012** PLS Board meeting, 10:00am at Railway Plaza, 115 Railway Street, Scottsbluff, NE. In the Conference room.

**March 19 — December 3, 2012** Basic Skills Online Classes

**March 29, 2012** NLA Paraprofessional Spring Meeting, "Show Off @ Your Library" will be held on Thursday, March 29, 2012 from 10am to 1pm central time. Contact Jennifer Sorensen at [sorensen0802@gmail.com](mailto:sorensen0802@gmail.com) or call 402-557-7304.

**April 8 - 14, 2012** National Library Week

**May 7 - 13, 2012** Children's Book Week

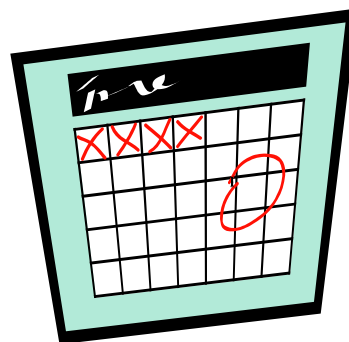
**May 8, 2012** PLS Board Meeting, 10:00am at Railway Plaza, 115 Railway Street, Scottsbluff, NE. In the conference room.

NLC Training and Events Calendar: <http://nlc.nebraska.gov/calendar>

PLS List Serve: [pls-l@nlc.state.ne.us](mailto:pls-l@nlc.state.ne.us)

PLS Website: <http://libraries.ne.gov/pls>

**Mark your calendars!**







Floyd Smith III,  
Penny Vincent,  
Devra Dragos and  
Deb Lafevre.

The Oshkosh Public Library Open House on Wednesday, January 25, 2012 was a huge success. Panhandle Library System President, Floyd Smith, gave a presentation on the new Panhandle Consortium which uses the Alexandria library software and its Online Public Access Catalog. Devra Dragos from the Nebraska Library Commission was on hand to discuss the Nebraska Overdrive consortium and ebooks in addition to the computers that the library received as part of the BTOP grant. A good crowd gathered for the afternoon and enjoyed coffee and cookies provided by the Friends of the Library group. Thank You to everyone for attending.



Melanie West and Floyd Smith III



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Morrill, Scotts Bluff, Sheridan and Sioux

**PLS Coordinator:** Vacant

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**March/April 2012**